

STATE OF NEW JERSEY  
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT  
ASSEMBLY BILL NO. 2921

July 30, 2010

To the General Assembly:

Pursuant to Article V, Section I, Paragraph 14 of the New Jersey Constitution, I am returning Assembly Bill No. 2921 without my approval.

In 2004, the Legislature established the "New Jersey Electronic Death Registration Support Fund" supported by death registration recording fees. The purpose of that Fund is to meet the developmental and operational costs of the New Jersey Electronic Death Registration System (EDRS) and to reimburse local registrars involved in this process. In 2007, the Legislature passed a law increasing the recording fee from \$5 to \$15. In making that change, however, the Legislature specified that the enhanced fee was temporary and would end on August 1, 2010.

Accordingly, under current law, the \$15 fee will revert back to its prior \$5 level on August 1, 2010. Assembly Bill No. 2921 bill would eliminate this sunset provision. It would allow the State registrar to charge an enhanced \$15 fee on a permanent basis for each human burial, removal, or transit permit issued.

Although I fully support the maintenance of the EDRS, I will not sign this bill into law. It is not fair to make the citizens of New Jersey continue to pay increased fees for the burial of their loved ones.

The EDRS is a valuable system. It will continue to be used throughout the State to increase timely reporting of these vital statistics. The Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) has sufficient resources, if managed appropriately, to maintain the EDRS without continuing the burden of this enhanced fee on our citizens. I am confident that the Commissioner will manage and maintain the EDRS within the current DHSS budget.

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The State of New Jersey continues to confront unprecedented financial difficulties. The economic crisis affects every citizen of the State. I reject the mindset that renewing, prolonging, or extending temporary fees is the way to solve our problems. State government must live within its means. We must increase efficiency and find ways to deliver essential services without raising costs. By declining to sign Assembly Bill No. 2921, I am affirming my Administration's commitment to these principles.

Accordingly, I herewith return Assembly Bill No. 2921 without my approval.

Respectfully,

/s/Chris Christie

Governor

[seal]

Attest:

/s/Jeffrey S. Chiesa

Chief Counsel to the Governor